

HISTORIC CONNECTION

A newsletter of the city of Las Vegas Department of Planning. The Historic Preservation Commission is dedicated to saving the city's legacy and heritage.

Paradise Un-Lost: Zick And Sharp Discovered As Paradise Village Architects

by Helana Ruter and Greta Rayle, Logan Simpson Design

The annual Historic Preservation Fund grant project has resulted in a fun discovery for local mid-century modern architecture enthusiasts. The Phase II Beverly Green Neighborhood Historic Survey and Inventory uncovered what is probably the first residential tract designed by the prolific local architecture firm Zick and Sharp in the 1950s.

The Phase II Beverly Green Neighborhood survey is part of an ongoing pursuit to maintain an inventory of historic resources within the city of Las Vegas and identify those buildings that meet the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. This most recent survey is the second of a three-phase project to inventory all homes and commercial buildings within the Beverly Green Neighborhood Association located between Oakey Boulevard, Las Vegas Boulevard, Sahara Avenue and South Sixth Street.

Local cultural resource management firm Logan Simpson Design (LSD) was hired by the city to complete the survey. LSD's report describes the historical development of the Paradise Village subdivision as beginning in 1950 when the first 47 lots were recorded by Paradise Realty Company, Inc. The lots were located in an undeveloped area immediately east of Las Vegas Boulevard and north of Sahara Avenue. The Tee Construction Company immediately began construction of the first homes on the west side of Santa Clara Boulevard. The success of the initial development led Paradise Realty to record tracts 2, 3, and 4 between 1950 and 1952 completing the design of the neighborhood between Paradise Road and Santa Rosa Drive.

The Paradise Village neighborhood appears to have been Zick and Sharp's first residential development. Plans for the homes



A Zick and Sharp home in the Beverly Green Neighborhood

followed three basic designs that utilized "cement brick and cinder block" construction and incorporated several stylistic variations. The single family homes had between two and three bedrooms ranging from 900 to 1,100 square feet in size. All of the homes were projected to sell between \$8,500 and \$10,000 and buyers received front yard landscaping, also designed by Zick and Sharp, with their purchase.

The homes were designed in the Minimal Traditional, Ranch and Contemporary styles. The modest square-shaped Minimal

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Traditional with medium pitched roofs and the more rectangular or L-shaped Ranch styles homes with low pitched roofs were common in the United States following World War II. The contemporary design with irregular shapes and unusual rooflines did not become as prominent until the 1960s making the Paradise Village subdivision distinctive for its time.

Walter Zick and Harris Sharp formed the Las Vegas architectural firm of Zick and Sharp in 1949 and practiced together until

1983 designing commercial, residential, governmental, educational and hotel/casino buildings. The firm became well known for designing buildings in the "Modern" architectural style with clean lines and limited ornamentation. An example of their commercial work is the Charles Building (1954) located in the survey area at 2233 Las Vegas Blvd. South. Other notable buildings by Zick and Sharp are the former Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino (1955), the Mint Hotel and Casino (1957) and the Union Plaza (1971).

The State Historic Preservation

Office has concurred with LSD's findings that the Paradise Village tracts 1-4 are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district. The proposed district is significant as an example of residential subdivision growth in Las Vegas following World War II and also for its association with the prominent architectural firm Zick and Sharp. The city's Historic Preservation Office will continue to work with the property owners within the proposed district if historic district designation is desired. HC

HP Update:



One of the proposed banner designs by artist Joseph Watson

Berkley Square Historic District Banners

The city of Las Vegas has contracted with local artist Joseph Watson to design interpretive banners for the Berkley Square Neighborhood Historic District. The purpose of the banners is to celebrate the history of the neighborhood and educate visitors and residents.

The banners will be placed on existing light poles around the district. Installation is expected by February 2013. Visit www.lasvegasnevada.gov/hp for updates and a notice about an unveiling event!

The project is funded by the Commission for the Las Vegas Centennial and administered by the Department of Planning and the Office of Cultural Affairs. The Berkley Square Neighborhood Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Westside School Master Plan And Rehabilitation Project

Construction on the rehabilitation of the Historic Westside School is about to begin. Funding comes from the Commission for the Las Vegas Centennial and the Las Vegas Redevelopment Agency. The Historic Westside School is listed on the city of Las Vegas Historic

Property Register, as well as the state and National Register of Historic Places. The city continues to work with the State Historic Preservation Office on the rehabilitation process.

For updates on the progress and dates, times and locations of public meetings, please visit www.lasvegasnevada.gov/westsideschool, Facebook at www.facebook.com/HISTORICWESTSIDESCHOOL and Twitter at www.twitter.com/HWSCHOOLLV. You can also e-mail questions to HISTORICWESTSIDESCHOOL@LASVEGASNEVADA.GOV.

2012 Historic Preservation Fund Grants

The city of Las Vegas has been awarded \$45,000 in grant funding from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) through the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), to complete the Phase III: Beverly Green Neighborhood Historic Resource Survey and Inventory. The Phase III survey area is generally bounded by East St. Louis Avenue, Santa Rosa Drive, East Sahara Avenue and South Sixth Street on the north, west, south and east respectively. The survey area includes approximately 141 single- and multi-family homes and commercial buildings generally dating from the early 1950s to the early 1960s. The predominant residential architectural style is modern Ranch.

The HPF originates with the National Park Service and is administered by the SHPO to assist with inventories of historic properties throughout the state. The city of Las Vegas

is a certified local government which allows for priority status for HPF grant applications. The city is typically awarded approximately \$30,000-\$40,000 annually to survey historic neighborhoods.

The survey of this area is part of the recommendation by the city of Las Vegas Historic Preservation Commission to develop a Mid-Century Architecture Historic Context Report for WWII and post-WWII development within the city of Las Vegas.

City Of Las Vegas Centennial Grant

Grants are for historic preservation projects within the city of Las Vegas boundaries, and are limited to \$100,000. Past grant projects include historic preservation events, lectures, educational materials, statues of historical figures and historic property restoration and rehabilitation. For more information, please contact Esther Carter at (702) 229-6672 or ecarter@lasvegasnevada.gov.

2012 State Historic Preservation Plan Is Complete And Online

Every eight years, SHPO prepares a plan that establishes historic preservation goals to be accomplished. Upon completion, the plan is adopted and approved by the National Park Service, and serves to prioritize grant applications and SHPO projects. In December 2011, the National Park Service approved the 2012 preservation plan for the state of Nevada. To access the plan, visit nvshpo.org. HC

HP News:

Historic Preservation And Archaeology Awareness (HPAA) Month Recap



Commissioner Beck and Historic Preservation Officer Courtney Mooney in a 1963 Cadillac Eldorado driven by Carole Christie of the Las Vegas Cadillac and LaSalle Club

Museums! Museums! Museums! With the opening of the Nevada State Museum, the National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement and the visitors center at the Neon Museum, the HPC decided to focus the 2012 HPAA month festivities on our city's great museum facilities and historic properties. Several museums, including those listed above and the Springs Preserve, National Atomic Testing Museum, Las Vegas Natural History Museum, Historic Morelli House, Lost City Museum and the Clark County Museum offered free or discounted passes and programming to help celebrate HPAA 2012. Tickets were snapped up by the public within a week of posting them online. The HPC thanks everyone who participated and looks forward to next year.

On May 16, 2012, Mayor Carolyn Goodman and HPC Vice-Chair Bob Stoldal read the Historic Preservation Month Proclamation and presented the annual HPC Historic Preservation Month awards during City Council. The 2012 awardees included: Ron James, the State Historic Preservation Officer, to recognize his 28 years of service in historic preservation; Clark County for adopting an historic preservation ordinance; City of Las Vegas and Neon Museum for funding the preservation and installation of three historic neon signs on Las Vegas Boulevard; City of Las Vegas and 300 Stewart Avenue Corporation (National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement Board of Directors)

for the historic preservation and adaptive reuse of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse; Las Vegas Commission for the Centennial for funding several historic preservation projects; Brian Paco Alvarez, Las Vegas News Bureau, for assembling and curating several historic exhibits, including the current exhibit at the Department of Planning, Business Licensing Division; and Ben Victor, artist and sculptor, for his sculpture of Helen J. Stewart.

West Charleston Neighborhoods: An Oral History Project Of Ward I

Commissioner Claytee White is at it again! Claytee, director of the Oral History Research Center at UNLV Libraries, has been asked to coordinate an oral history project in Ward 1, which is represented by Councilwoman Lois Tarkanian. Claytee will be interviewing residents from the Westleigh, McNeil, Rancho Circle, Rancho Bel Air, Artesian, Scotch 80s, Glen Heather and Palominos neighborhoods. The project is designed to gather the history of Las Vegas during the 1940s-1970s while seeking answers to why multi-generational families continue to live within the ward and how these areas have transformed to attract new residents.

The project is funded by the Las Vegas Centennial Commission. Similar Centennial-funded projects completed and in progress by Commissioner White and the Oral History Research Center are the John S. Park Neighborhood Historic District and Historic West Las Vegas oral histories. The project hopes to provide more data for researchers about interesting topics and themes that include gender, class, race and ethnicity, local politics, organized crime, age and generation, gentrification and community formation. The final product will include audio, video and hard cover publications of interviews. If you know someone that should be interviewed, please contact Claytee D. White or Barbara Tabach at (702) 895-2222. HC

Biography Corner:

Historic Preservation Commissioner Colleen Beck



HPC Commissioner Colleen Beck

As the world waits on the edge of their seats to find out if the 15th century skeletal remains found beneath the British car park really are Richard III, the HPC's archaeologist, Commissioner Colleen Beck (Category 10 – Archaeological Profession), works locally to identify and preserve a very different history. Beck, appointed to the commission on June 15, 2011, is a research professor at the Desert Research Institute. She manages archaeological and historic preservation work at the Nevada National Security Site (formerly the Nevada Test Site). She established a program to document nuclear testing remains, commonly known as "nuclear archaeology." The most interesting find, according to Beck, was the discovery of a very intact atmospheric testing location, called Smoky. Testing areas were normally cleaned up after the blasts; however, the Smoky test site contains tower remnants, elevator parts and underground bunkers strewn across the landscape, providing a rare view of this material culture.

Before arriving in Las Vegas more than 20 years ago, Commissioner Beck's student research and professional work took her across the United States and into South America, including a two-year stint in Peru. Her love of the American West is rooted in her childhood, having been born and raised in San Jose and Sacramento, California. Family vacations included Lake Tahoe, Reno and Wyoming to visit her grandparents' rural ranch. In between frequent stops at every roadside marker and historic site the family could find, Colleen devoured the mystery and adventure stories that eventually inspired her to pursue (and achieve) a Ph.D. with an emphasis in archaeology.

Commissioner Beck is also a "professional volunteer," having served on the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Board, San Joaquin County Historic Records Commission in California, Technical Advisory Board for the Whitney Mesa Environmental Research Park, Nevada Archaeological Association, BLM Mojave-Southern Nevada Resource Advisory Council, University of Nevada Press's Editorial Advisory Board and an earlier appointment on the city's HPC from 1995 to 2002. The commission is happy to have her back and looks forward to working with her on archaeological education and awareness pursuits. HC

Lost-Saved-Threatened

"Editor's note: This section of the newsletter features significant restoration projects, preservation successes and threatened resources but not necessarily one of each in every issue."

by Courtney Mooney, historic preservation officer

Saved: Morelli House Listed In The National Register Of Historic Places



Morelli House in downtown Las Vegas

The Morelli house, located at 861 E. Bridger Ave., was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 3, 2012. The National Register is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. On October 11, 2012, the Junior League of Las Vegas hosted an open house

event at the Morelli House to celebrate the designation. Mayor Carolyn G. Goodman attended the event and spoke on the importance of the designation and preserving the community's significant historic places.

In 1959, Antonio and Helen Morelli built their home at 52 Country Club Drive within the confines of the prestigious Desert Inn Estates, overlooking the world-class Desert Inn Golf Course. In 2001, the homes in the estates were subject to demolition, so the Junior League of Las Vegas saved the Morelli House, relocating it to 861 E. Bridger Ave. The league faithfully maintains the 1959 appearance of the home while rehabilitating it as an office, event space and history museum. Rescue through relocation has made restoration and rehabilitation possible.

"The Morelli house is an excellent example of mid-century Modern style in Las Vegas during the late 1950s and early 1960s, a period of flamboyant and rapid growth in the city," says State Historic Preservation Officer Ron James. "The house is significant in the area of architecture as an integral component of the city's architectural history and development."

Morelli's home has been restored to its original 1959 appearance. Highlights include the original kitchen complete with vintage appliances and lighting along with period-appropriate furniture designed and selected by Vladimir Kagan. Today, the Morelli House continues to welcome guests. For more information on other historic locations within the city of Las Vegas, please visit www.lasvegasnevada.gov/hp. HC



The Historic Preservation Commission is an 11-member board made up of community members appointed by the Las Vegas City Council. The board is responsible for hearing and making recommendations regarding the designation of historic landmarks, properties and districts to the city's historic register; overseeing alterations and new construction of designated historic properties and making recommendations to the City Council. Meetings: Fourth Wednesday of each month, 12:15 p.m., Historic Fifth Street School, 401 S. Fourth St., Las Vegas, NV 89101 except in November and December when they are often combined.

Dorothy Wright, chairperson

Bob Stoldal, vice-chairperson

Mary Hausch

Patrick J. Klenk

Robert Bellis

Richard H. Cuppett

Claytee White

Jarmilla McMillan-Arnold

Jack LeVine

Colleen Beck

Donald Hotchkiss, Jr., P.E.

David Millman, ex-officio

For more information about historic preservation efforts, contact:
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Upcoming Events:

**Preserve Nevada Symposium:
Historic Preservation = Sustainability**
Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 2012

**Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino,
129 Fremont St., Las Vegas, NV**

Statewide historic preservation group Preserve Nevada will host a historic preservation-sustainability symposium on sustainable building rehabilitation, renewable energy and federal and state land use policy within the context of Nevada.

The symposium will feature discussion and debate on impacts of renewable resource development to historic western landscapes, sites, and buildings.

The symposium is sponsored by Preserve Nevada, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, The city of Las Vegas, The Brookings Institution—Brookings Mountain West, The UNLV Urban Sustainability Initiative and the UNLV Public

History Program. For more information, visit www.preservenevada.org.

**2012 Mayor's Urban Design
Awards (MUDA)**

The city of Las Vegas is accepting nominations for the 2012 MUDAs. MUDA awards celebrate projects that foster the city's commitment to historic preservation, sustainability and livability in one of four categories: 1) Buildings and Their Environs, 2) Public Places, 3) Public Art, and 4) Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse.

Nomination forms are available at the front counter at the Development Services Center, 333 N. Rancho Drive or online at www.lasvegasnevada.gov/muda from Oct. 1, 2012 through Nov. 5, 2012. Anyone is invited to nominate projects; however, the project must be located within city limits and be completed by Dec. 31, 2012 to qualify. The awards will be presented at the State of the City address on Jan. 10, 2013 by Mayor Carolyn G. Goodman. HC

Kudos:

Dennis McBride has been named director of the Nevada State Museum in Las Vegas.

HPC Commissioner Claytee White, director of the Oral History Research Center, along with colleagues Rachel Anderson and Jeanne Price, has been

awarded the Medal of Freedom from the Nevada State Bar for her work on the February (Black History Month) issue of Nevada Lawyer.

**Congratulations to Dennis and
Claytee! HC**